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THE HOUSING OF THE MOBILIZED POPULATION.

BY LAWRENCE VEILLER,

Secretary and Director, National Housing Association.

The question of the mobilization of the population in these war times and especially of the housing of that mobilized population has to be considered from two aspects: one, the effect on the cities, or communities to which the mobilized population go, and the other the effect on the cities from which they come. We also need to consider the question broadly from two other aspects: one, the housing of the fighting forces and, two, the housing of the industrial army.

THE HOUSING OF SOLDIERS

In the housing of our soldiers, our new armies, we have been fortunate. This being America, we might very naturally have expected that the lessons that were forced upon us at such great cost in our little Spanish-American War some twenty years ago would have been forgotten, but they were not forgotten, and there have not been in this war the appalling great scandals of more soldiers dying in our camps from preventable disease than were actually killed in the war itself, which characterized our Spanish-American War. It is true that some new problems have developed, some new dangers, but with the watchful eyes of such men as General Gorgas and the skilled medical men of the country we have been able to prevent any very serious loss from unnecessary disease, and we have housed our new armies in a way, that, while not ideal and not beautiful, still on the whole is one that marks a distinct advance over the methods in vogue in our last war, or in vogue in most other countries.

The question of building cantonments and the housing of soldiers I may touch upon only briefly. These are some of the new lessons we have learned: first, that it is a mistake to *warehouse* the men—to house them by wholesale. It is a mistake even to try to put a whole company of 250 men in one building. We have found that the smaller the unit the better the results. The first plans contemplated putting 150 men in a barracks, then 200 in a barracks and then 250.

General Gorgas, last June, said he really wanted to house the men in huts, with three men in a hut, but the Quartermasters Department did not see its way clear to doing anything of that kind. The typical plans adopted today, and according to which the barracks are going to be built in the new cantonments, provide for 66 men in a barracks instead of 250. The original plans showed only 338 cubic feet of air space per man, a condition that was quite serious; thanks to the efforts of a few of us headed by General Gorgas and Dr. Welch and Dr. Vaughan and Dr. Martin, a change in the plans was forced through the coöperation of Secretary Baker, by which the men are now afforded the proper amount of cubic air space, namely over, 500 cubic feet per man, so that the danger of epidemics from such diseases as meningitis, tuberculosis and other diseases of the respiratory organs has been reduced to a minimum.

Another important thing in connection with the housing of the soldiers is the necessity for adequate ventilation, for quantities of moving air. We were discouraged to find at one stage of our discussion of the plans nearly a year ago, that while we had succeeded in getting those who were responsible for the plans to put in a lot of windows which were not there in the first drawings, most of these windows had been made impracticable because lockers had been constructed directly in front of them all across the dormitories, shutting off the air. We succeeded in having the lockers eliminated entirely. The men now hang their clothes on pegs near their cots. They are not supposed to bring more than one suit case with them and that goes under the cot. We find that system is working beautifully, and we do not have those little cubby holes of wood to encourage vermin and become a collecting place for all kinds of food. Incidentally the elimination of lockers has removed one of the temptations to breaches of discipline. The soldier is not allowed to take food to his bedroom, and this has always necessitated constant inspection of lockers.

THE HOUSING OF THE INDUSTRIAL ARMY

But the main problem giving the country concern is no longer the housing of its soldiers but the housing of the industrial army, and that is a problem that is fraught with very great difficulty. To the great mass of the people in this country prior to the war the word "housing" was unknown. It is now the subject of

frequent discussion by the people as well as the press. The housing of the industrial army in America has become an immediate and pressing problem because of the fact that we have suddenly created in places where there were no industries or only minor ones before, vast industries employing from 10,000 to 50,000 men. Again we have taken some small city of 30,000 or 40,000 population and have almost over night doubled its population by placing contracts in the factories in that town for the manufacture of munitions or war supplies of one kind or another. In addition to this localized and peculiar increase of population in those communities where there are war contracts, there has been, also, practically a cessation of ordinary building operations throughout the entire country; that is, the building of homes, which in normal times goes on at a definite rate has practically stopped, due to a variety of causes that I need not go into here, except to mention perhaps, the high price of money, the high price of labor, the high price of materials, the inability of getting building materials and the fear of depreciated values after the war—all of which have caused men to hesitate to build for speculative purposes.

It was this on-coming situation which dawned upon a number of people, a very limited number, last June, ten months ago, and which caused them to agitate this question of housing. The Council of National Defence held hearings, testimony was taken, and various commissions, one after another, were appointed at Washington and the matter was thoroughly gone into. Evidence was produced showing that war industries were slowing down their productive capacity from 30 per cent to 50 per cent, with all that that means in ability to win the war where speed is so vital. This was ten months ago, this slowing down of 30 per cent to 50 per cent because of lack of housing. This quotation is from the official report.

Those ten months have gone and we have not started yet. Public spirited men, "dollar a year" men, have been spending time in Washington, and with unspeakable patience have stayed there and worked and still they are without power in the matter. Legislation was introduced in Congress only this February, when it should have been introduced last fall or last spring when Congress was still in session, and that legislation is still being debated in Congress. The bill has been in Congress two months, and if this

problem had been taken up last June or last September all the houses would have been built today and the productive capacity of our great factories turning out munitions of war would have been doubled in most cases. Instead of working eight hours a day these factories would be working twenty-four hours.

Every industry producing munitions and ships ought to be a continuous industry during the life of the war. There is not a citizen who doubts that, and yet what has happened? The unlimited number of both skilled and unskilled laborers, brought into this country as foreigners, green to everything, unfamiliar with the language and not knowing what they could earn, were forced to take any job that was offered to them. Wages were relatively low and manufacturers could get all the labor they wanted, so that these men were often forced to live like animals. They were frequently put into bunk houses, four men to a room, in double deck bunks, with inadequate air space, and often with the beds working three shifts in twenty-four hours. The beds were actually kept warm all the time—the fellow who turned in turned the other fellow out.

But today with the labor supply shut off from the beginning of the war, through cessation of emigration; with the withdrawal of men because of the draft creating a great dearth of labor of all kinds, both skilled and unskilled; with the sudden demand for increased industrial output made necessary by the war, the labor supply became seriously depleted, and now we find not only the mechanic, but the unskilled laborer who knows his power, asserting his manhood and saying, "I am not going to live like an animal any more. I won't live in your bunk house. I won't sleep four men in a room. I won't sleep with three shifts using the same bed;" and he goes to another job. So it is not now merely a problem of attracting labor but that of holding it, and the whole country has been forced to consider the question of what we can do to stabilize the labor supply—not how can we attract the kind of labor we want by increased wages but how can we hold it permanent by decent living accommodations. The providing of improved housing and opportunity for proper domestic life seem to be the most important methods of doing it. Men are human whether there is a war or not, and they want life that is life; they want amusements; they want recreations; they will be better fighting men and better working men for all of those things. No human being in contact with the pulsing life of

this country can seriously question that. In discussing this question of industrial housing the other day it was advocated that it was just as necessary to provide a moving picture show as to put in the water supply system. Things of this kind are essential to hold labor.

Think of men laboring and using up every bit of energy, working at great speed and under a high tension, having to live the life of a sodden beast without family or home or comfortable living and with absolutely nothing to amuse them. Of course, that is unspeakable and its natural result is the I. W. W. We not only have to build houses of the right type, houses that have light and air and are sanitary and safe, but we also have to provide some of the amenities of life. We want garden villages; we want trees and grass and shrubs and we want leisure for the workers and amusements and recreation for them indoors and outdoors both. It will make them fitter for their jobs and we will be better able to supply our armies. These are cold hard facts.

Getting the desired legislation has been somewhat complicated, because, in order to allow the government not only to build houses but whole communities in some cases; in isolated places to build streets and sewers, water and lighting systems, moving picture shows, and schools and places of public amusement;—in order to do this new powers had to be conferred, which seemed a vast departure, and made Congress loath to grant the legislation in question. The houses are being built to win the war. Only on that basis is Congress thinking of appropriating \$110,000,000 and having the government go into the business of building houses. They would not for a moment have dreamed of considering favorably this project of the government's going into the housing business, which some of them term "state socialism," except as a means of winning the war.

One of the vital questions that has arisen is whether the houses should be built for temporary use or be permanent structures. Those who have studied the question know the advantages of permanent buildings. A permanent structure can be built almost as quickly and almost as cheaply as a temporary one.

Then the question came up of whether to house the workers or *warehouse* them—whether, for instance, we were to house each single man in a separate room or whether we should adopt the old-fashioned dormitory or barracks type with the men all in one big room;

or whether we should have private rooms with a single man in a room. The federal government in the new standards adopted as to how houses shall be built has set a high-water mark in that respect, which is going to be of value to the country for generations after the war is over. One of the interesting by-products of the war is the disappearance of the bunk house, the establishment of the right kind of hotels for single men and women, the declaration against the tenement house, and the preference for the small house as the normal domicile of the American working-man.

We hope that out of the situation will come the formulation of a national policy with regard to the housing of the working people of this country. The time has come when the people of this country should consider the question of a national policy for the housing of its workers. It is a great mistake to go on as in the past, housing people as animals, and with a sort of *laissez faire* policy that everything will come out all right. We have had too many concrete demonstrations of the fact that it does not come out all right, to let us be content with that sort of practice. So one of the things that is going to come out of this awakened interest in housing, because of dramatic war-time manifestations of its fundamental importance, is undoubtedly a wider recognition by the people of the whole United States of the fact that as are the homes of the people so is the citizenship of the country.

THE MOBILIZATION OF WOMEN

BY MRS. NEVADA DAVIS HITCHCOCK,

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Women responded all over the country when war was declared by President Wilson. Their patriotism was manifested in various ways. The desire to serve their country was shown by organizations already engaged in war work pledging renewed energy and extended fields of service. Such organizations are the Red Cross, Emergency Aid and Navy League. Women's clubs and associations all over the United States offered their services to President Wilson with such an avalanche of letters and telegrams that our President saw this was